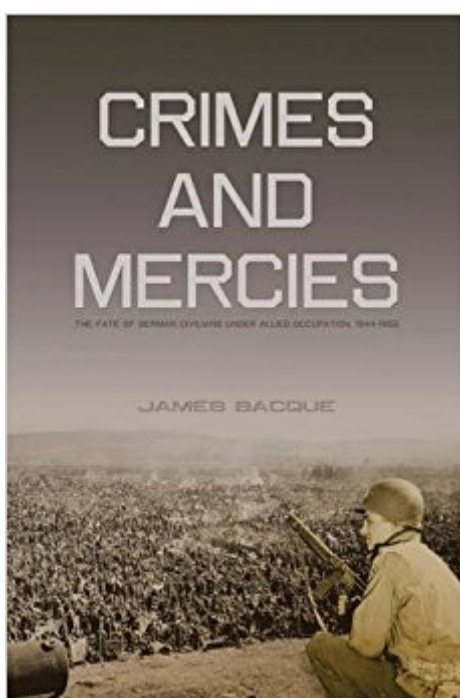


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# Crimes And Mercies: The Fate Of German Civilians Under Allied Occupation, 1944&#150;1950



## Synopsis

More than 9 million Germans died as a result of deliberate Allied starvation and expulsion policies after World War II; one quarter of the country was annexed, and about 15 million people expelled in the largest act of ethnic cleansing the world has ever known. Over 2 million of these alone, including countless children, died on the road or in concentration camps in Poland and elsewhere. That these deaths occurred at all is still being denied by Western governments. At the same time, Herbert Hoover and Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King created the largest charity in history, a food-aid program that saved an estimated 800 million lives during three years of global struggle against post-World War II famine; a program they had to struggle for years to make accessible to the German people, who had been excluded from it as a matter of official Allied policy. Never before had such revenge been known. Never before had such compassion been shown. The first English-speaking writer to gain access to the newly opened KGB archives in Moscow and to recently declassified information from the renowned Hoover Institution in California, James Bacque tells the extraordinary story of what happened to these people and why. Revised and updated for this new edition, bestseller *Crimes and Mercies* was first published by Little, Brown in the U.K. in 1997.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A scholar of great courage and perseverance who deserves to be heard." — Dr. Dwight D. Murphy  
"A scholar of great courage and perseverance who deserves to be heard." — Dr. Dwight D. Murphy

James Bacque James Bacque is a novelist, book editor, essayist and historian whose work has helped raise awareness in human rights issues associated with war crimes, particularly spurring debate on and research into the treatment of German POWs at the end of World War II. His fiction titles include *The Lonely Ones*, 1969 (Big Lonely in the paperback edition, 1970); *A Man of Talent*, 1972; *Creation* (with Robert Kroetsch and Pierre Gravel), 1972; *The Queen Comes to Minnicog*, 1979; and *Our Fathers' War*, 2006. His history titles include *Crimes and Mercies*, an immediate bestseller upon release, and *Other Losses*.

I had read the first book *Other Losses*. These books will open your eyes to the terrible atrocities committed against common German soldiers AFTER hostilities of the war. It's terrible and disgusting. as well as inhumane. That's not what we Americans are about

Very powerful, my history!

Great product. Love the price & fast delivery.

The only "good news" contained in this book is, I suppose, the fact that the fate of the Germans in the non-Russian-occupied portions of Germany were somewhat better than that of those poor souls left to the mercies of the communists. Germany is still an occupied country, 70 years after the allies conquered it. Perhaps that's what they really wanted after all. The propaganda put out about the Germans, dating to World War I, would seem to offer the "moral" (yuck!) "imperative" to destroy Germany. And they certainly got their wish.

great shape

*Crimes and Mercies* is a very difficult book to read as well as review. Bacque is an excellent writer. If you believe what Bacque has written, you get the feeling that everything you thought you knew about the Allied occupation of Germany has been turned on its head. Bacque's basic premise is that casualty figures reported by the allies in post-war Germany are greatly under-reported, that the Allied occupation was brutal, and that these facts are still being covered up by the government, historians and the media. This may sound like conspiracy theory to some people, but is it? Bacque cites published British statistics showing the death rate in their zone of occupation during the

Allied-imposed famine of 1947 was the same as the German death rate in 1939. The British figures are of course, completely ridiculous. Bacque also details American records that are missing, destroyed, or still classified. The American authorities should make these documents accessible (as did the Russians) to clear up any doubts about Bacque's claims. Bacque contrasts Soviet occupation policy to that in the western zones. Bacque verifies what Victor Gollancz wrote, that the Soviets in spite of their brutality (including mass rape and imprisonments), in some ways got life in the DDR back to normal a whole lot quicker than the Americans, Brits & French did. The Soviets put Germans back to work, fed them etc. This was true at least until 1948-1949 when Truman fired Morgenthau. However, in the Soviet-occupied territories east of the Oder-Neisse life was pure hell, the German population murdered, imprisoned, enslaved, tortured, and the survivors finally ethnically cleansed. For those who question of the western allies plundering Germany, they may want to do some research into the Quedlinburg Art Treasures. I personally remember being in Heidelberg castle in 1970, and viewing the empty display cases in the museum - which had a note that the contents were stolen by British soldiers. For the most part, *Crimes and Mercies* is very depressing, but there are elements of humor. On page 164, Bacque describes George Marshall going ballistic on Molotov in 1947 because Molotov had insisted that the Americans were taking reparations without reporting them. Who would have thought that the Americans were as good at stealing as the Soviets, also that we were double-crossing the Russians, and getting indignant with them when they asked us to adhere to agreements? I'm certain this would have upset FDR greatly, being the faithful friend and ally to Stalin that he was. Also humorous was the French occupation authorities sending Edith Piaf and lecturers to Germany to entertain the populace, and being surprised that very few people turned out to see them. This occurred at a time where the Germans were on starvation rations and thus more interested in attending to their own survival rather than drinking in the joys of French "culture". As other reviewers have mentioned, there are flaws in this book. Bacque appears a bit paranoid at times. I don't believe Bacque is a communist, yet, sometimes he paints too rosy a picture of the Soviet prison camps. For example, Bacque writes that when German prisoners received care packages from home, they often shared the contents with their Soviet guards. I would find it more believable that the Soviet guards confiscated their packages and if they felt like it, gave the prisoners some of the remains. However, I may be wrong about this, but I can't say I've ever come across claims such as these made by Bacque. Anyone I've ever heard of who returned from a Soviet prison camp returned in pretty rough shape. Several passages in *Crimes and Mercies* stand out in particular. From page 27 "The Morgenthau Plan has three remarkable aspects: that it was devised, that it was implemented after it had been cancelled, and that it has since been covered up

so well. Now it has shrunk from sight in the West. The basic idea of the plan was to wreck or confiscate all important German industry, converting the country into a huge farm, while at the same time destroying the fertilizer plants on which German agriculture depended. It would also cut Germany into pieces, and allot a huge piece of territory to the Poles and Soviets. On Page 44, there was something I wish I hadn't read: "The most gruesome killing was witnessed by the prisoner Hanns Scharf, formerly of California, who was watching as a German woman with her two children came towards an American guard in the camp at Bad Kreuznach, carrying a wine bottle. She asked the guard to give the bottle to her husband who was just inside the wire. The guard opened the bottle into his own mouth, and when it was empty, threw it on the ground and killed the prisoner with five shots. " Bacque goes on to state " In months of work in the Washington archives of the army, no court martial of this or similar incidents has ever turned up,."The heroes and villains of this book are apparent. Herbert Hoover was a genuine humanitarian, and I credit his religion (Quakers) as being one Christian sect that actually stands up for what is right and just. Crimes and Mercies gave me renewed admiration for Harry Truman, although I wish he would have been faster and gone farther in reversing the insane policies of FDR. Of the villains, it is difficult to find anything to admire about Morgenthau. He was a vile apparachik whose intent was to starve millions to death. Eisenhower also does not come off well in this book, not at all. Crimes and Mercies is inconvenient history, and is not perfect, but it is an important book that should be read.

the author I feel exaggerated too must but interesting.

Chapter and verse on one of the great crimes of Eisenhower. Does that upset you? Read the book and call me a liar.

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